

let out for the summer and students tried to find summer work.

That is why I have re-introduced the "Port Opportunity, Reinvestment and Training (PORT) Act" with my colleague, Chair of the Congressional Urban Caucus and PORTS Caucus member, Congressman CHAKA FATTAH of Pennsylvania. This legislation authorizes the creation of a grant program at ports throughout the country to hire eligible high school students over the summer. This is a win-win for the American economy. Our nation's ports have long been engines of economic growth, and so there is no better place for students to learn the skills they need to compete in today's workforce.

These grants are an investment in the communities that need them most. Not only will these grants put money in the pockets of high school students facing unprecedented levels of unemployment, but they will build a foundation for successful communities and successful adults.

I urge my colleagues to support this crucial investment in our students, our communities, and our economy.

CELEBRATING JOHN AND JEANETTE MASON'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize John and Jeanette Mason, who are celebrating their 50th anniversary this month. As John and Jeanette have discovered, the secret to a successful marriage is having a supportive partner. Interestingly enough, this same quality serves as the foundation for strong and vibrant communities. John and Jeanette's commitment not only to one another but also to our community has touched the lives of countless families in Fairfax City and across Northern Virginia, and I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating this wonderful couple.

John's public service began with the U.S. Army, where he served for 21 years before retiring as a Colonel. Any longtime resident of Northern Virginia is familiar with the tremendous work done during John's 14-year tenure as the Mayor of the City of Fairfax, where his leadership ensured adoption of the city's "2020 Plan," which became the roadmap for Fairfax City's revitalization efforts. Moreover, John is responsible for spearheading the redevelopment of Old Town Fairfax, including the new City of Fairfax Regional Library that serves as the anchor for the area's redevelopment efforts. John and Jeanette were instrumental in the building of the beautiful Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax City and countless other community projects that have ensured Fairfax remains one of the region's top-rated communities in which to live, work, and raise a family.

I have had the privilege of working closely with John on many of the issues he is most passionate about and dedicated to, including the future of transportation in Northern Virginia. After retiring from the Army, John was tapped by SAIC for his expertise on transportation issues, and with Jeanette's support,

John's decision to enter public service once again ensured that Northern Virginia benefitted from his wealth of knowledge on transportation policy. Through John's tireless work on the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, he became the go-to elected official on regional transportation issues. Over the years, John became a force to be reckoned with. As many can attest, few individuals know more than John does about bus fleets, congestion patterns, Metro, or commuter delays in Northern Virginia.

John's work on the Fairfax County-Fairfax City Interjurisdictional Committee and his belief in vigorous good neighbor policies elevated the relationship between the City and County to new heights. In addition, John worked to strengthen the City's ties with neighboring George Mason University, which would not enjoy the prominence it does today without John's advocacy for a robust relationship between the university and the surrounding community.

More recently, John and Jeanette have made incalculable contributions to Fairfax's local arts community. John has served as the Chairman of the Arts Council of Fairfax County and as the President of the Fairfax Symphony. He currently serves as the President and CEO of the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center, where he oversees all aspects of the art center's planning and operations. He is also the founder and president of Fairfax Spotlight on the Arts, an annual three-week festival that showcases artists in local venues. And of course, many of the region's music patrons are familiar with John and Jeanette's active support of the City of Fairfax Band Association, Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, not to mention many other orchestras across Northern Virginia.

John and Jeanette's marriage is a testament to the durability of a loving relationship, and our community continues to benefit mightily from the local contributions from their partnership. John would happily admit that his many accomplishments would not be possible without the love and support of Jeanette. Her care, love, and support during John's battle with cancer assured his return to vigor, ensuring a healthy retirement spent with their children, John Jr., Joanna, and Jeffrey, and their grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating John and Jeanette Mason on their 50th anniversary and in wishing them many more years of happiness.

IMPROVING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 21, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1412, the "Improving Job Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2013." There are over 800,000 veterans unemployed, or unable to find work in the United States, and the number is rising every year. If our brave men and women are to serve at home and abroad, it is our moral obligation to help

ensure they can successfully transition into the workforce. For this reason I support the legislation before us.

H.R. 1412 would extend for one month an expiring provision of law that limits pensions paid to certain veterans who are receiving Medicaid coverage in Medicaid-approved nursing homes. The bill also would modify the conditions for veterans to receive education benefit payments from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for participating in on-the-job training and require VA to enter into agreements with other federal agencies to promote on-the-job training opportunities for veterans.

The Improving Job Opportunities for Veterans Act will reduce the final OJT/Apprenticeship salary requirements that employers pay of the normal wage from 85% to 75% to encourage employers to offer more OJT/Apprenticeship training for an additional 4 years. The bill also requires other Federal agencies to enter into agreements with the Department of Veterans Affairs to hire veterans using the OJT/Apprenticeship benefit and extends reduced pension benefits for certain veterans in Medicaid funded nursing homes.

If enacted, CBO estimates that, on net, the bill would decrease direct spending by \$14 million over the next five years and by \$12 million over the next ten years. Because the bill would affect direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures apply. Enacting H.R. 1412 would not affect revenues. In addition, implementing H.R. 1412 would have an insignificant effect on discretionary spending.

Mr. Speaker, instead of returning home to their loving families, friends, and loved ones, 12 percent of veterans—about 1 in 8—are returning home to find unemployment lines. We owe it to these men and women who selflessly served our nation to help them change their condition for the better. The legislation before us, H.R. 1412, is a step in the right direction for veterans across the country and for many of the 35,000 veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars who live in the Houston metropolitan area.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join in me in supporting H.R. 1412, the "Job Opportunities for Veterans Act of 2013."

RECOGNIZING NEW MEXICO STATE REPRESENTATIVE NICK SALAZAR

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 2013

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor New Mexico Rep. Nick Salazar who received the "Lifetime Achievement Award" from Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Rep. Salazar is one of the most distinguished members of the New Mexico Legislature, having represented his district, which encompasses Colfax, Mora, Rio Arriba and San Miguel counties, since 1973. Incredibly, Rep. Salazar has worked for Los Alamos National Laboratory for 63 years. In both roles, Rep. Salazar has been an effective leader who has had a profound impact on his community, his state and a thankful nation.

During his distinguished career at LANL, Rep. Salazar was responsible for ensuring that the lab was a responsible and productive